

WHY DID PRESIDENT CLINTON AND AL GORE VETO EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY?

(Mr. WELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, there is an important question that we should be asking every day; and that is, is it right, is it fair that under our Tax Code a married, working couple, a husband and wife, with two incomes pays higher taxes just because they are married? Is it right, is it fair that under our Tax Code 21 million married, working couples pay on average \$1,400 more just because they are married?

Back home in the south suburbs of Chicago, a machinist and a school teacher making a combined income of \$62,000 pay on average \$1,400.

That is 1 year's tuition at Joliet Junior College. That is 3 months' daycare at a local day-care center.

The question of the day, my colleagues, is why did President Clinton and AL GORE veto our efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty? Is it because the President and AL GORE want to spend that money rather than eliminating the marriage tax penalty?

When Bill Clinton and AL GORE vetoed our efforts to eliminate the marriage tax penalty, they broke the hearts of 21 million hard-working, married, working couples who should have their marriage tax penalty eliminated.

Mr. Speaker, let us work together, let us work in a bipartisan way to eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

REASON TO CELEBRATE: CONGRESS HAS NOT SPENT ONE NICKEL OF SOCIAL SECURITY ON ANYTHING ELSE

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, take I-16 right out of Savannah, go about 20 miles west and make a left on Highway 280, go through Pembroke, go through Daisy, and approach Evans County, Georgia, and there on the left-hand side is a little, one-story greenhouse; and in there lives Ms. Edna Thompson. I am going to make up the name, but this is true.

Edna Thompson lives there. She has been a widow for 17 years. She is on a fixed income. We call it Social Security. She always talks to me and worries about what is happening to my Social Security. I hear they are spending money in Kosovo. I hear they are going to increase foreign aid. I hear a lot of things about spending money in new programs. But are they taking it out of Social Security?

Today I can look her in the eye and say, no, ma'am. In 1999, for the first

time in modern history, Congress has not spent one nickel of her Social Security.

But do not take my word for it. Today they can get this from the official Congressional Budget Office that, for 1 year, Congress has not spent one nickel of Social Security on anything but Social Security.

It is reason to celebrate.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 20, 1999.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I have the honor to transmit a sealed envelope received from the White House on October 8, 1999 at 3:20 p.m. and said to contain a message from the President whereby he transmits a report on the continued production of the naval petroleum reserves beyond April 5, 2000.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAH.

CONTINUED PRODUCTION OF NAVAL PETROLEUM RESERVES—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 106-142)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Armed Services and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 201(3) of the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976 (10 U.S.C. 7422(c)(2)), I am informing you of my decision to extend the period of production of the naval petroleum reserves for a period of 3 years from April 5, 2000, the expiration date of the currently authorized period of production.

Attached is a copy of the report investigating the necessity of continued production of the reserves as required by 10 U.S.C. 7422(c)(2)(B). In light of the findings contained in that report, I certify that continued production from the naval petroleum reserves is in the national interest.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.
THE WHITE HOUSE, October 8, 1999.

CORRECTIONS CALENDAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is the day for the call of the Corrections Calendar.

The Clerk will call the bill on the Corrections Calendar.

ADDING MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HOLIDAY TO LIST OF DAYS ON WHICH FLAG SHOULD ESPECIALLY BE DISPLAYED

The Clerk called the bill (H.R. 576) to amend title 4, United States Code, to add the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday to the list of days on which the flag should especially be displayed.

The Clerk read the bill, as follows:

H.R. 576

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That section 6(d) of title 4, United States Code, is amended by inserting "Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, the third Monday in January;" after "January 20;"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM).

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 576 would add the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday to the list of days on which the flag should be especially displayed.

Currently, section 6 of title 4 of the United States Code, which designates the time and occasions for the display of the United States flag, provides that the flag of the United States of America should be displayed on all days and then lists certain days that it should especially be displayed. The list contains nine Federal holidays.

□ 1415

In fact, all of the Federal holidays, except for the holiday honoring the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., our Nation's great civil rights leader.

The nine other permanent Federal holidays are listed in the Flag Code to remind Americans to show respect and appreciation for the individuals and events that have had such a profound influence on the history and success of our great Nation. Regrettably, and apparently due to simple oversight at the time the King holiday became a Federal law in 1983, it was not added to the list in the Flag Code. And so it is right to take this measure up on the Corrections Calendar here today.

H.R. 576 is very simple. It will correct the oversight that left the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday off the list in the U.S. Flag Code of days on which Americans are urged to display the American flag. Identical legislation passed the House last year. Unfortunately, it passed on the last day of the 105th Congress and did not become law.

H.R. 576 deserves our bipartisan support. I urge the Members of the House

to join together in correcting this oversight in the Flag Code. By adding the King holiday to the Flag Code and asking Americans to display the flag on the day we honor Dr. King, we will encourage Americans to honor Dr. King and his magnificent efforts to advance civil and human rights in America.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BENTSEN) and ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 576, legislation which I introduced correcting an oversight that occurred in the 98th Congress during the establishment of the Federal holiday celebrating the birth of our Nation's greatest civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Specifically, my legislation will add Dr. King's holiday to the list of Federal holidays in which the American flag should be displayed in honor of that person or event.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) and the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN) of the Speaker's Correction Day Advisory Group as well as the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) for the work that they have done on the Committee on the Judiciary on this as well.

An identical bill which I also introduced in 1998 was adopted by the House on the last day of the 105th Congress last year. Unfortunately, the other body had not acted and therefore no law moved forward. Furthermore, the Senate has adopted an identical version, S. 322, in this Congress.

This legislation was first brought to my attention during the 105th Congress when a constituent from my district with a particular interest in vexillology, the study of flags, contacted my office after discovering that Dr. King's official holiday was not being observed through the U.S. Flag Code. This omission, while not intentional, should be offered to the American people as yet another avenue they can use to honor the memory and the legacy of Dr. King.

It is customary during the establishment of official Federal holidays to signify the importance of the date through its recognition in the U.S. Flag Code. The 77th Congress of the United States passed Public Law 623 which codified the U.S. Flag Code. This legislation also ensured that as new

Federal holidays were added, like the Federal holiday honoring Dr. King, official notation in the Flag Code would occur without delay. Unfortunately, the legislation, Public Law 98-144, establishing the holiday recognizing Dr. King, failed to include language necessary to reference the U.S. Flag Code.

The U.S. Flag Code encourages all Americans to remember the significance of each Federal holiday through the display of our Nation's banner. The Flag Code reminds people that on certain days each year, displaying the flag will show respect for certain individuals and events that have shaped our great Nation. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the greatest civil rights leader of our age, deserves the respect and reverence symbolized by the raising of our Nation's banner in his memory.

Mr. Speaker, another extraordinary aspect about this legislation is how this oversight was brought to my attention. A constituent, Mr. Charles Spain, a resident of Houston and president of the North American Vexillological Association, contacted me about this glaring oversight 2 years ago. In fact, he became aware of this legislative oversight 7 years ago. I am grateful for his diligence and assistance in helping my office and the Congress to correct this error. His effort demonstrates that all citizens have the ability to contact and petition their Congress and make important contributions to the legislative process. While I am certainly honored that my office could play a small part in furthering the efforts to raise public awareness of Dr. King's life and achievements, I am most pleased as well that a private citizen of the United States and a constituent has been able to utilize the levers of the House of Representatives to effect legislative change.

I believe the American people should be afforded the opportunity to pay their respects to the memory of Dr. King and all of his achievements through the display of our flag on his day. Of the 10 permanent Federal holidays, only the day honoring Dr. King lacks this specific honor, and I believe that as Dr. King's holiday fast approaches, it is now appropriate to correct this omission.

Mr. Speaker, the Corrections Calendar was designed to provide an expedited legislative procedure for correcting errors in the law. Today, the House can achieve that and two additional goals: one, ensuring that our Nation honors a true American hero who made the ultimate sacrifice in order to make our Nation and all people in the world a better place; and the second, proving that a single citizen, in Mr. Spain, can make a difference in the American democratic experiment.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure to further honor the legacy of Dr. King and to continue to move forward with his dream.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), the ranking member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I come to indicate my strong support for H.R. 576. I want to thank the gentleman from Texas, our colleague from Houston, and also the gentleman from Florida, the chairman of the subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary, for moving this forward with the speed at which it has come. I appreciate that very much, and on behalf of all of those in this country who realize that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is probably the most significant figure in the 20th century, not only in America but in the world in terms of the understanding that he has brought to human rights and peace and justice.

Dr. King has been a very strong force in my life. He has been a good friend of Rosa Parks, who came from Montgomery, Alabama to Detroit to associate herself with my efforts for many, many years, and in the course of it, I had the honor of getting to know Mrs. Coretta Scott King and indeed the entire King family. There exists in Atlanta now a Martin Luther King Center for Nonviolence which is still a shrine to which people come from around the world to join in the understanding of justice and peace and humanitarianism, the reaching out, and also to reflect on the civil rights struggle.

Dr. King will forever remain a symbol of what the best of America can be, and in a way what Charles Spain and the gentleman from Texas have done is really in the wake of and in the spirit of Dr. King himself. This is a small but critical correction. Every holiday encourages us to display the flag except this one, inadvertently left out. How it got left out after 15 years of struggle to get the bill passed, heaven only knows.

And so I am very delighted to join in what I am sure will be unanimous support for the measure that is before us now. I thank again all of the sponsors and those that have made it possible.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan for his kind words.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT).

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, I want to associate myself with the remarks of the gentleman from Michigan, the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on the Judiciary. What I would like to say, I was not here to speak on this issue, I am here on my legislation honoring the mother of Louis and Carl Stokes, but I want to say this. This is a bit of irony in the House today. Martin Luther King, Jr. was targeted by the Justice Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and much of our establishment. He was targeted basically because, in the gentleman from Michigan's words, he

was a great man but he happened to be a great black man. As a result, America feared that power, and today we embrace the vision. That is what we should be doing. That is the essence of this legislation.

I am very glad that I was on the floor, Mr. Speaker, and I am very proud to be associated with this vote. I commend all those responsible.

Mr. BENTSEN, Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me this time. I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT). This is long overdue. In fact, I followed the gentleman from Texas as his constituent raised this issue with him. I want to congratulate him for the effort to bring about this correction and acknowledgment of the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King.

As the gentleman from Texas knows, Texas was one of the States that gathered early, although it was not an easy vote and debate, to make the Martin Luther King holiday a State holiday in the State of Texas, and, of course, supported it being a Federal holiday. It is well known that Dr. King was many things to many persons, but I think what we will all remember him for is being principled and being an advocate in the eye of the storm. Many times what he advocated was not in the popular poll. And even as he spoke about opening up opportunities that we might be able to participate in the accommodations of hotels and restaurants, I think his mind was thinking even further about how to make this Nation a better place.

And so as we acknowledge in the Flag Code his day by exhibiting the flag in all of our homes, this is a special acknowledgment, that even though you may be going in the eye of the storm and may not have the popular cause, it is right to have the right cause and the principled cause. I think we all can reflect on that now as Dr. King in the waning hours of his life went into Memphis and other places, one, to talk about the Vietnam War and, two, to talk about economic opportunity and prosperity. Now many of us reflect upon his words and his mission to realize that he was right, that we should seek peace in this world, and that we should seek economic prosperity.

So I congratulate the gentleman from Texas and join him in supporting this legislation and would hope my colleagues would support it.

Mr. BENTSEN, Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. Speaker, I want to let the gentleman from Texas know

how much I appreciate his sponsorship of this and to note that when we sing the Star Spangled Banner, we end up by talking about the land of the free and the home of the brave. There cannot be any finer tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King than when celebrating his day in this country that we display the flag and in a sense confirm his journey for freedom and his journey of bravery.

Mr. CAMP, Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 576, a bill introduced by the gentleman from Texas. The gentleman's legislation would amend the U.S. Flag Code to add the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal holiday to the list of days on which the flag should especially be displayed.

As chairman of the Corrections Advisory Group, it was my pleasure to work with Congressman BENTSEN and the minority ranking member, the gentleman from California, Mr. WAXMAN, and the rest of the members of the committee to expedite consideration of this Corrections Day bill.

This bill was favorably reviewed by the Corrections Advisory Group and is fully supported by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. The advisory group was able to work with the Speaker and the committees of jurisdiction to bring this bill to the floor today.

The Corrections Calendar was formed to provide a special forum to address unnecessary, outdated, and obsolete laws. Bills considered on our Corrections Calendar are first considered by the Corrections Day Advisory Group, which meets periodically to consider various legislative proposals designed to improve the federal government's efficiency and effectiveness.

The standing committee of jurisdiction must then act and report the bill before it can be placed on the Corrections Calendar. Only after the committees of jurisdiction have acted and the Speaker has consulted with the minority leader, can the legislation be placed on the Corrections Calendar.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is clearly a "corrections bill." Every other Federal holiday is listed in the Flag Code, and when Congress approved Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 1983, it was not added to the Flag Code through an unintended oversight. Similar legislation passed the House last year, but because it was passed on the last day of session, did not become law. This year, the Senate has also passed similar legislation, and it is high time to pass this bill and see it become law.

Mr. Speaker, this is a straightforward, bipartisan bill that corrects a glaring error in our Flag Code, and pays due respect to our Nation's greatest civil rights leader. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 576.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 576—To Amend the Act Commonly Called the "Flag Code" to Add the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday to the List of Days on Which the Flag Should Especially be Displayed. This bill adds the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday to the list of days on which the U.S. flag should especially be flown.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday was established in 1983 as a national holiday to celebrate his birthday. The laws relating to the flag of the United States are found in detail in the United States Code and designate on which

national holidays the flag should particularly be flown.

Unfortunately, when the holiday for Martin Luther King, Jr. was designated, Congress inadvertently failed to include additional language in the legislation to list the new holiday in the Flag Code. We stand today to correct this wrong.

Our flag originated as a result of a resolution adopted by the Marine Committee of the Second Continental Congress at Philadelphia on June 14, 1777. The resolution read, "Resolved, that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field representing a new constellation." Little did they know when this resolution was passed that Martin Luther King, Jr. would live to represent one of the brightest stars in a new national constellation of freedom, liberty, racial equality and justice.

Mr. Speaker, there are those who have fought for liberty, there are those who have bled for liberty, and there are those who have even died for liberty. Martin Luther King, Jr. died fighting for the liberty of our people. We honor him and his legacy by flying the flag of the United States in memory of this great and shining star.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 576. This bill would amend the act commonly called the "Flag Code" to add the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday to the list of days on which the Flag should especially be displayed.

Our flag is more than scraps of colorful cloth because it symbolizes the country itself. On Monday, June 14th, our nation celebrated the 222nd birthday of the U.S. Flag. Since the adoption of the Stars and Stripes pattern by the Continental Congress our flag has been a symbol of unity. Unifying people of different backgrounds under a singular banner. Our Flag is recognized as a symbol of freedom and justice throughout the world.

When the flag was first adopted in 1777, the U.S. Continental Congress justified the flag's attributes this way: "White signifies purity and innocence; Red, hardiness and valor; Blue signifies vigilance, perseverance and justice," with the stars forming "a new constellation." With a description like that, it's no wonder that many associate the same values represented in the Flag with the activities of Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King's life was a unifying force during the civil rights struggle.

Dr. King's beliefs and actions are at the core of what it means to be an American. His words and actions changed American history and have left a lasting legacy for future generations to follow. King battled desegregation in Birmingham, recited his dream of racial harmony at the rally in Washington, marched for voting rights in Selma, Alabama, and provided inspiration for all Americans. I congratulate Mr. BENTSEN on his sponsorship of the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. BENTSEN, Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCOLLUM, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered

read for amendment and the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

□ 1430

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS). The question is on passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and (three-fifths having voted in favor thereof) the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the Senate bill (S. 322) to amend title 4, United States Code, to add the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday to the list of days on which the flag should especially be displayed, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

Mr. BENTSEN. Reserving the right to object, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM) for an explanation.

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, this text is virtually identical to the Martin Luther King corrections bill we just passed in the House. It has already passed the Senate. This way we can send it immediately to the President, and it becomes law, and it is purely technical in that regard. But I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the Senate bill, as follows:

S. 322

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. ADDITION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. HOLIDAY TO LIST OF DAYS.

Section 6(d) of title 4, United States Code, is amended by inserting "Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, third Monday in January;" after "January 20;".

The Senate bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

A similar House bill (H.R. 576) was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

**ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the provisions of clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Such rollcall votes, if postponed, will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 6 p.m. today.

**FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT
ANIMAL PROTECTION ACT OF 1999**

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1791) to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide penalties for harming animals used in Federal law enforcement, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1791

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Federal Law Enforcement Animal Protection Act of 1999".

SEC. 2. HARMING ANIMALS USED IN LAW ENFORCEMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 65 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 1368. Harming animals used in law enforcement"

"(a) Whoever willfully and maliciously harms any police animal, or attempts to conspire to do so, shall be fined under this title and imprisoned not more than one year. If the offense permanently disables or disfigures the animal, or causes serious bodily injury or the death of the animal, the maximum term of imprisonment shall be 10 years.

"(b) In this section, the term 'police animal' means a dog or horse employed by a Federal agency (whether in the executive, legislative, or judicial branch) for the principal purpose of aiding in the detection of criminal activity, enforcement of laws, or apprehension of criminal offenders."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 65 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

"1368. Harming animals used in law enforcement."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 1791, the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The Federal Law Enforcement Animal Protection Act of 1999 was introduced by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) and passed both the Subcommittee on Crime and the full Committee on the Judiciary by voice votes. This bill proposes to add a new section to the Federal Criminal Code that would make it a crime to willfully and maliciously harm any police animal or attempt to conspire or attempt or conspire to do so. The bill defines police animal as a dog or horse employed by a Federal agency for the principle purpose of detecting criminal activity, enforcing the laws or apprehending criminal offenders.

Under current law, harming an animal used by the Federal Government for law enforcement purposes can only be punished under the statute that punishes damage to government property. The statute imposes punishment based on the value of the damage done in monetary terms. Under that statute a criminal who kills a police dog might receive only a misdemeanor sentence due to the low monetary value of the dog; but, as we all know, the government spends a considerable amount of time and money to train these animals. And the government employees who use these dogs during the course of their law enforcement work often form a close bond with them, and so their work can suffer when the animal they work with each day is harmed.

In many cases these animals have prevented harm to citizens and even saved the lives of children, and so it is appropriate that we punish criminal acts towards these animals more harshly than we punish damage done to inanimate government property. Under the bill, the maximum punishment that could be imposed for harming a police animal is 1 year in prison. If the offense permanently disables or disfigures the animal or results in the serious bodily injury or death of the animal, the maximum punishment that can be imposed increases to 10 years in prison.

I support the bill. I believe the bill strikes the right balance. I thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) for his leadership in bringing this issue to the attention of the Committee on the Judiciary, and I urge all my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Under current law, Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman has indicated, damage from an animal owned by the Federal Government is punishable as destruction of Federal property. More specifically, willful harm to an animal owned by the Federal Government whose damage or injury is valued at less than